vs. Union of India and others intcr-alia directed that the advice of the Commission shall ordinarily be binding on the Government.

(b) No Sir, the position stated above is reflected in the NCBC Act 1993 in Subsection 2 of Section 9.

(c) Docs not arise.

(d) The Government has to take a view on the advices of the NCBC before notifying inclusions/exclusions of castes/ communities in the Central List of OBCs. Such a decision has its socioeconomic and political impact and hence the decision has to be taken at the highest level in consultation with the Ministries/Departments concerned with the subject matter. Time limit of one month can not be adhered to in this regard.

(c) and (f) At any given point of time, inevitably there would be some persons who would become ineligible for Government jobs due to over-age and other factors. Taking this into account the Government of India, amongst other things, has already given age relaxation of three years in case of OBC candidates.

Import of Sunflower and Soyabean under OGL

*311. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR:
DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether sunflower and soyabean are to be imported under Open General Licence;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) its impact on indigenous industries; and

(d) the measures proposed to encourage increase in the indigenous production of sunflower and soyabean;

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) The Government has placed Soyabean seed in split and cracked form and Sunflower seeds in the Free List of Imports with effect from 15th October, 1998. Import of Sunflower seeds is subject to Quarantine restrictions.

(c) Free imports are expected to help better utilisation of the indigenous installed capacity. Presently, only 35 to 40% capacity is being utilised due to shortage of oilseeds in the country.

(d) A centrally sponsored Oilseeds Production Programme (OPP) is under implementation in 23 States covering 374 selected Districts. Under the Scheme, financial assistance is provided for the critical inputs, like production and distribution of seeds, distribution of seed mini-kits, sprinkler sets, improved farm, implements, gypsum/pyrites, micro-nutrients and rhizobium culture etc. In addition, Frontline and General Demonstrations are also organised on the farmers' felds to disseminate the production technology.

Development of SSI sector

*312. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a seminar of "Strategies for speedier of SSI sectors"; was held in the Capital recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith suggestion made by the participants;

(c) whether it is a fact that around eighty five percent of the units in this sector are yet to have any form of access to bank finance;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to narrow down the gap between the level of credit available and the credit requird by SSI sector?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKA.NDER BAKHT):

(a) and (b) A Seminar on "Strategies for Speedier Development of SSI Sector" was organised by the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 27th October, 1998 at PHD House, New Delhi.

Important suggestions made by the participants in the Seminar were formulation of a financial package for tiny sector, setting up of new corporation to provide credit -related guarantee for tiny units, greater thrust on sub-contracting to assist small scale units for facilitating technology and finance availability from large units, reducing harassment to SSI sector on account of Inspector Raj by repealing laws that have outlived their utility and development of new concepts in banking to help small scale units for better access to funds.

(c) and (d) In a sample survey conducted by the Office of the DC(SSI) in the year 1995-96, it was found that only 13.26% of the SSI units covered in the survey had availed of loans from banks and financial institutions. However, no firm conclusions regarding the overall access of SSI units to bank finance can be drawn on the basis of the results of this sample survey alone, as it covered only 12474 working registered SSI units.

(e) In order to narrow down the gap between the credit available and the credit required by the SSI sector, several steps have been taken by the Government and the Reserve Bank of India. Following are some of the important instructions issued by the RBI to the banks in this regard:

(i) SSI units requiring aggregate fund based working capital limits upto Rs. 4 crores (raised from earlier limit of Rs. 2 crores) from the banking system may be provided working capital limit computed on the basis ©f simplified procedure and on the basis of minimum 20% of their projected annual turnover.

(ii) Out of the funds normally available to SSI sector under priority sector lending programme of the banks, 40% be given to units with investment in plant and machinery upto Rs. 5 lakhs; 20% for units with investment between Rs. 5 lakhs to Rs. 25 lakhs and remaining 40% for other units.

(iii) To accord SSI units with a good track record the benefit of lower spreads over the prime lending rate with a view to moderating the cost of credit to SSI units.

(iv) To delegate enhanced powers to the branch managers of the specialised SSI branches so that

most of the credit proposals are decided at the branch level.

(v) Enhancement of ceiling on loan amount of composite loan scheme to Rs. 5 lakhs from earlier ceiling of Rs. 2 lakhs to ensure timely availability of term loan of working capital to smaller SSI units.

(vi) To ope rationalise more specialised SSI branches at centres where there is a potential for financing many SSI borrowers. As on March 1998, 370 specialised SSI branches are working in the country.

(vii) To extend 'Single Window Scheme' of SIDBI to all districts to meet the financial requirements (both term loan & working capital) of SSIs.

तिलहन पेराई उद्योग में सेवास्त व्यक्ति

*313. **श्री राज मोहिन्दर सिंह** :

श्री कपिल सिब्बल :

क्या श्रम मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार ने तिलहन पेराई उद्योग में सेवारत व्यक्तियों की संख्या संबंधी आकलन किया हैं;

(ख) यदि हां, तो उनकी संख्या कितनी है;

(ग) क्या यह भी सच हैं कि इस उद्योग में रोजगार देने के लिए व्यक्तियों की संख्या में और वृद्वि करने की संभावना हैं; और

(घ) यदि नहीं, तो इस संबंध में सरकार की क्या प्रतिक्रिया हैं?

श्रम मंत्री (डा. सत्यनारायण जटिया) : (क) से (घ) वनस्पति तेल उद्योग में नियोजित व्यक्तियों की संख्या के संबंध में कोई तथ्यात्मक जानकारी उपलब्ध नहीं है, तथापि, व्यापार स्त्रोतों के अनुसार, तिलहन क्षेत्र प्रत्यक्षत: व्यापार एवं अप्रत्यक्षत: एक मिलियन से अधिक व्यक्तियों को रोजगार प्रदान करता हैं।